VIII. RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

125. Defects in the present system of management of Devaswoms and the desirability of separating Sirkar Devaswoms from the control of the Revenue Department.

Mr. Devan Vasudevan Nambiatiri (Member, Jenmi, Kottayam Division) complained about the indifferent administration of the Devaswoms conducted at present by the officers of the Revenue Department and also about the unsatisfactory manner in which the *pathivus* of the various Devaswoms were revised. The Member objected to the diversion of items from *purathêpaditharam* to those of *akathêpaditharam*. He submitted that the expenditure on *oolsavams* and the *purathêpaditharam* generally should not be reduced, as that was inconsistent with the position of Government as trustee of the Devaswoms. He suggested the following measures for the better administration of the Devaswoms :—

1 The Devaswoms should be separated from the control of the Revenue Department, as the Tahsildars and Peishkars had very little time to devote to Devaswom matters.

2. The Devaswoms in the State having been divided into Major and Minor, all Minor Devaswoms in the neighbourhood of the Major Devaswoms should be brought under the latter for purposes of administration. It was not necessary to increase the staff attached to the Devaswoms but each Major Devaswom with its subordinate Devaswoms should have, in addition to the Manager, a local Committee, consisting entirely of non-official members to manage its affairs. Government Officers also should be appointed to supervise the work done by the Committee.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

126. Suggestions for the management of Devaswoms.

Mr. Thrivikramar Vasudevar (Member, Jenmi, Padmanabhapuram Division) began with an enquiry into the origin of the Devaswom endowments in Travancore and went into the history of their assumption by Government from 987 M. E. He then urged the need for separating the Devaswom lands from Sirkar lands and for the maintenance of separate accounts of revenue and expenditure of the Devaswoms. He also referred to the report on the Devaswoms submitted by Mr. M. K. Ramachandra Row, Special Officer, and endeavoured to show that the approximate revenue of the Devaswoms arrived at, according to his calculations, was more reliable than that estimated by the Land Revenue Department from 1088, after conducting a preliminary enquiry into the matter. According to the latter, the approximate annual revenue from the Devaswom lands was only about Rs. 3 lakhs a year or something less than a fourth of Mr. Ramachandra Row's figure. The Member stated that that estimate was wrong and protested against the adoption of the figures based on that estimate in the budgets from 1088 onwards, as they gave rise to an impression that the Devaswoms were being maintained from the State revenue, whereas the truth was that the surplus revenues from the Devaswoms had merged into the ordinary land revenue to an enormous extent. He requested that, when the time came for the separation of the Devaswoms from the Revenue Department, all the properties belonging to the former together with the surplus since their assumption, should be returned with interest. He then suggested the following measures for the better management of Devaswoms:—

1. The report of Mr. Ramachandra Row, the Special Officer on Devaswoms, State Charities and Purificatory Ceremonies, should be published.

2. Mr. N. Rajarama Row, Dewan Peishkar, Quilon, should be deputed to conduct the settlement of the Devaswom properties and revise the scales of expenditure in the several Devaswoms, according to their financial position as revealed by the settlement.

The Member also dwelt at length on the indifference shown by most of the revenue officers in the administration of the Devaswoms.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

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